

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2001

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President:

In anticipation of your visit to Poland, we write to request that you discuss with the Polish Government a matter of great importance to us and our constituents: the need for a non-discriminatory law governing restitution or compensation of property confiscated by the Nazi or communist regimes in Poland.

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, on which many of us serve as Commissioners, has held two hearings on the issue of property restitution in Central and Eastern Europe. Many of our constituents have joined a class lawsuit against the Polish Government in a U.S. court seeking the return of their property or alternative compensation. The issue has also generated interest among some state legislators who have begun considering actions that can be taken at the state level against the Polish Government. Property restitution in Poland is an important matter for thousands of people who fled to the United States because of religious, ethnic or political persecution in Poland during or after the Second World War.

On behalf of these individuals, we request your support in urging the Polish Government to carry through with its previously stated commitment to enact a fair, non-discriminatory property restitution law. Such a law is necessary to enable the return of private property confiscated by the Nazi or communist regimes in Poland or, when the actual return of property is not possible, to provide alternative compensation to rightful owners. We also urge you to underscore to the Polish Government—as has been repeatedly stressed to officials in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia and elsewhere—that any law which excludes from restitution or compensation persons who no longer have Polish citizenship or residence is discriminatory.

Since regaining its independence in 1989, the Republic of Poland has established itself as a model for free and democratic societies in Eastern Europe. While we are disappointed that Poland has delayed so long in addressing property restitution, when a law is eventually passed we hope that it will not be marred by the problems seen in other countries—problems such as discriminatory provisions and the failure to faithfully implement the laws according to their terms and in a timely fashion.

For individuals with ties to Central and Eastern Europe, the restitution of property is not ultimately about land or money, but rather is about obtaining a measure of justice for the oppression

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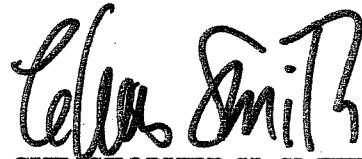
and persecution they and their families suffered under previous regimes and an acknowledgment of the wrong done to them through the expropriation of property. We encourage you to continue the policy of encouraging non-discriminatory restitution or compensation of property to individuals, as well as ethnic and religious groups. We believe your trip to Poland offers an opportunity to deliver this message directly to the Polish Government and, indirectly, to other governments in the region which also have further work to accomplish in this regard.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We wish you well on your upcoming trip to Poland and elsewhere in Europe. We look forward to hearing from you on this matter upon your return.

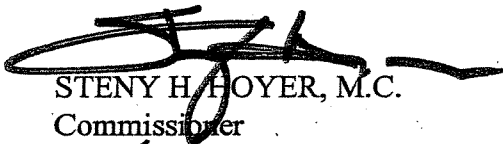
Sincerely,



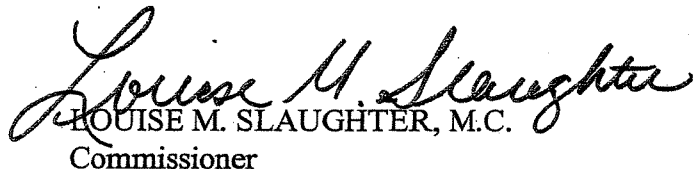
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, M.C.
Commissioner



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, M.C.
Commission Co-Chairman



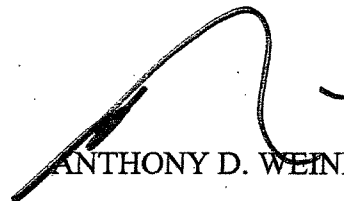
STENY H. HOYER, M.C.
Commissioner



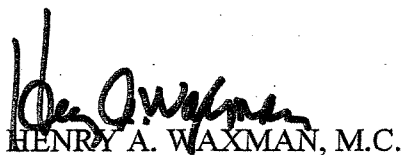
LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER, M.C.
Commissioner



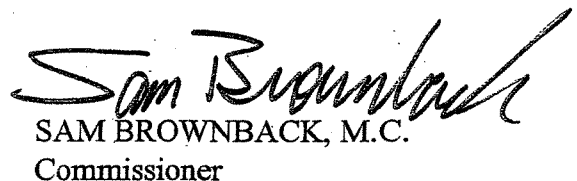
ALCEE L. HASTINGS, M.C.
Commissioner



ANTHONY D. WEINER, M.C.




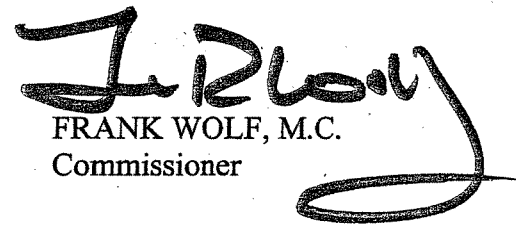
HENRY A. WAXMAN, M.C.



SAM BROWNBACK, M.C.
Commissioner

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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, M.C.
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FRANK WOLF, M.C.
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